Snap

Tacos:
Beef
Chicken
Vegetarian

Play
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GeoCities co-founders John Rezner and David Bohnett
Businessmen Bohnett wanted to help people create websites. He teamed up with Rezner, a tech-savvy computing manager at McDonnell-Douglas, and GeoCities was born
Jason Scott
Half a dozen unofficial efforts, notably the Internet Archive as well as Jason Scott and Archive Team, managed to mirror substantial portions of GeoCities before its 2009 termination by owner Yahoo
The Digital City, Amsterdam, version 3.0
Amsterdam's nonprofit, city-wide virtual community started in 1994. It helped inspire both other virtual cities, and sites like GeoCities
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TOUCH SCREEN VIDEO WALL
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TRUMP IS QUESTIONED ON "BIRTHER" CONTROVERSY
CLINTON SAYS TRUMP CALLS WOMEN "PIGS", SLOBS AND DOGS"
DEBATE START
FINISH
Minutes
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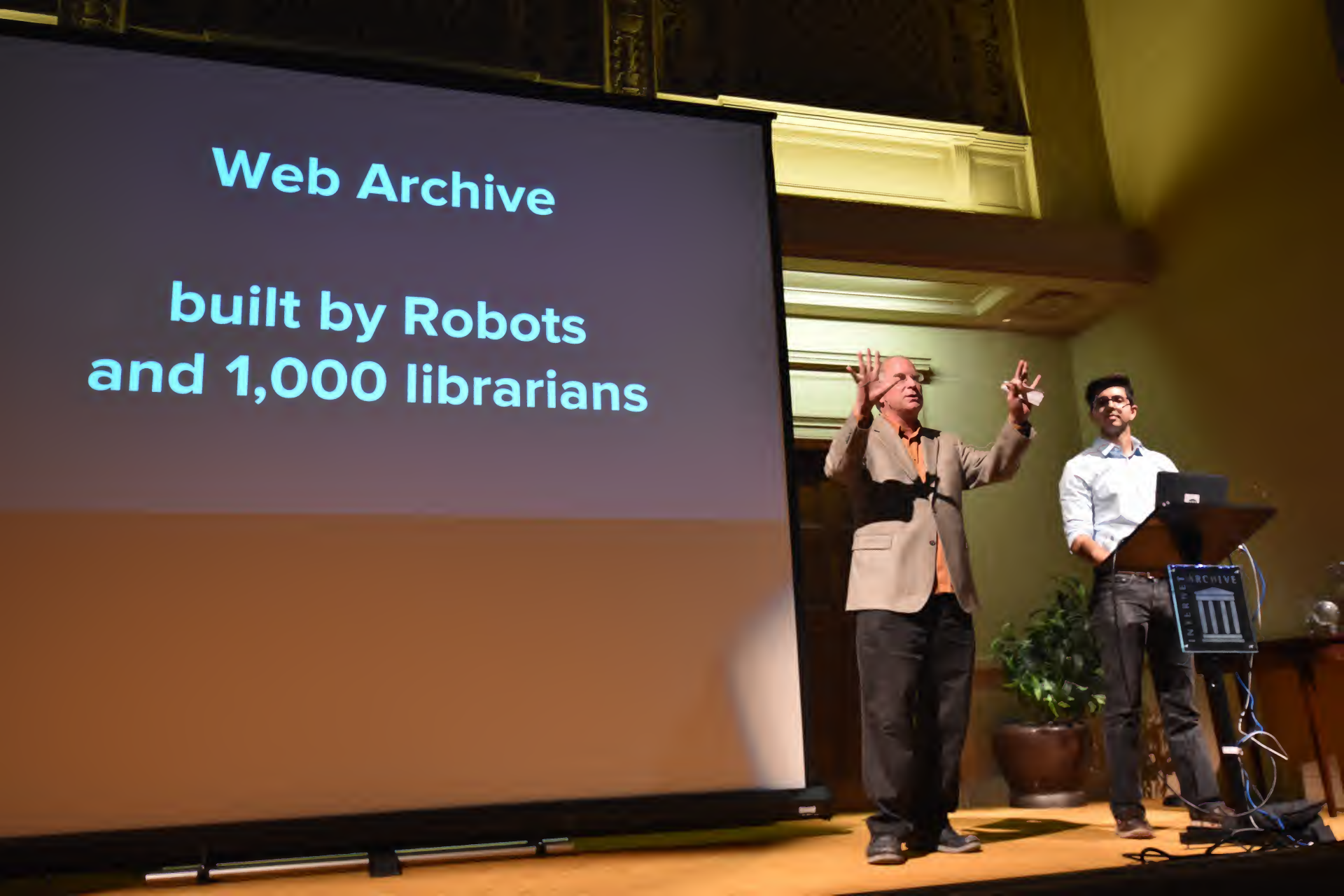
Web Archive
built by Robots
and 1,000 librarians
INTERNET ARCHIVE

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Benjamin Mandel
Volunteer
Kenji Nagahashi
Software Engineer
John Lekashman
Contractor

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DIRECTOR OF MEDIA & ACCESS
TRACEY JAQUITH
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Tacos
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Preserve

# What was Geocities?

Started in 1994 as Beverly Hills Internet by David Bohnett and John Rezner, GeoCities grew into the biggest online community of its era. Besides personal pages there was business hosting, world news, shopping, and more. After a spectacular IPO GeoCities was bought by Yahoo! in 1999 for over $3 billion.

But then a new kind of online community took off. The focus of sites like MySpace and Facebook wasn't general topics, like Beagle owners or punk rock. Their focus was you, the user—and your connections to your friends.

Yahoo! eventually decided GeoCities was obsolete. All 38 million pages of the main English-language site were to be erased in October 2009.

Then several groups of hacker preservationists stepped in. The Internet Archive, Archive Team, and other volunteers preserved tens of millions of pages. You can find most at the Internet Archive, https://archive.org/web/geocities.php.

GeoCities Japan however, is still thriving today.

GeoCities co-founders John Rezner and David Bohnett

Jason Scott

Hal's dozen unofficial efforts, notably the Internet Archive as well as Jason Scott and Archive Team, managed to mirror substantial portions of GeoCities before its 2009 termination by owner Yahoo.

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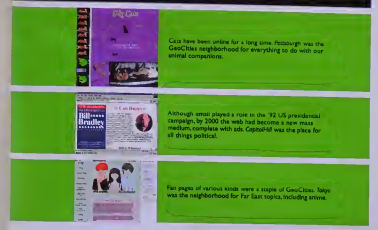


This cheerful home page welcomed visitors to GeoCities in its heyday. Today, what remains of the massive site is mostly raw files and screenshots. What's the best way to preserve and present this kind of digital ruin? As the web ages, future historians—and artists—will face such problems again and again.

Cats have been online for a long time. Pittsburgh was the GeoCities neighborhood for everything to do with our animal companions.

Although email played a role in the '92 US presidential campaign, by 2000 the web had become a new mass medium, complete with ads. Capitalism was the place for all things political.

Fan pages of various kinds were a staple of GeoCities. Tokyo was the neighborhood for Pet Stun topics, including anime.

## the Neighborhoods

In 1999 GeoCities was the third most-visited site on the web.

Its tens of millions of "homesteaders" created personal pages in theme-based neighborhoods of their choice. Those neighborhoods started out as webcams in real places in Los Angeles—one in the gay mecca of West Hollywood, another in Beverley Hills for high-end shopping. But when GeoCities invited users to add their own pages on those themes, a virtual land rush began.

By 1999 there were 41 theme-based neighborhoods, ranging from fan fiction to fine dining. You could also choose from *WallStreet* for investing and finance, *WestHollywood* for LGBT, *EnchantedForest* for kids, *Heartland* for hometown values, and so on. Tools and templates made it easy to get started—no HTML skills required.

*Deleted City* is an interactive visualization created by Richard Vijgen, of the 650-gigabyte backup of the early web hosting service GeoCities. Vijgen's "excavation" of the files that remained depicts the file system of the GeoCities backup as a city map, spatially arranging the different neighborhoods and individual lots based on the number of files they contain. Much of the user-interface to the original GeoCities was lost.

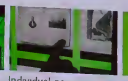
Richard Vijgen investigates new strategies to find the big stories in big data through research and design. He designs and produces interactive data visualizations and data installations ranging from microscopic to architectural in scale. His studio is based online, but resides in the Netherlands. His work has been widely recognized by many professional organizations and publications, including Wired, Geotalion, The Smithsonian, Rhizome, The European Design Awards, and The Dutch Design Awards.

Learn more at richardvijgen.nl/#.

The entire map

Neighborhoods

User pages



Individual page

In full view, the map is a data-visualization showing the relative sizes of the different neighborhoods. While zooming in, more and more detail becomes visible, eventually showing individual HTML pages and the images they contain.

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